

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A-1

WASHINGTON TIMES
31 January 1984

U.S. intelligence

The scorecard shows 'plusses'

By Edward Neilan
WASHINGTON TIMES STAFF

Fifty major terrorist organizations are now operating worldwide and all of them are for hire, a government source said yesterday.

U.S. intelligence has increased the number of agents combating these terrorists, some of whom operate on a free-lance basis and others

who have organizational backing or operate under the tacit blessing of the Soviet Union.

The administration is endorsing an international approach to fighting terrorism similar to worldwide measures against piracy in centuries past.

A highly placed source, speaking on the condition that names would be withheld and no one would be quoted directly, gave this overview of world intelligence issues:

The defection or expulsion of 147 Soviet KGB agents in 20 countries around the world last year amounted to a tremendous setback for Moscow. The effect has been so serious that Soviet emphasis is being shifted from intelligence to counterintelligence.

In addition to the KGB reversals, the Soviet Union and client states suffered setbacks or found their hands full in Nicaragua, Afghanistan and Cambodia. Other nations are experiencing more success in resisting Soviet-sponsored infiltration.

Terrorism remains the one area where Soviet-backed operations are increasing and there is concern that the upcoming Olympic Games

in Los Angeles will be eyed as a target by these groups.

The main training grounds for the most active terrorist groups are Libya, South Yemen, Syria, Bulgaria and the Soviet Union.

It is known that the Oct. 23 bombing of the U.S. Marine headquarters in Beirut was carried out by a Shi'ite group of about 20 members. The mission was launched from a

base camp in the Bekaa Valley. The members of the group stopped off at a mosque in downtown Beirut for blessing before carrying out the attack.

The source said published reports that as many as 500 American intelligence agents are aiding the 12,000 to 18,000 contra guerrillas

fighting against the Marxist Sandinista regime in Nicaragua are erroneous. The figure is closer to 20 and the results of their efforts were described as remarkable.

Reports that the administration was downplaying an alleged Soviet role in the 1981 attempt to assassinate Pope John Paul II also were denied. The source said the KGB was known to have been involved in murder in the past and there were direct links between the alleged assassin Mehmet Ali Agca and Bulgarian intelligence, which in turn works closely with the KGB.

There has been a gradual buildup in the CIA's Directorate of Operations as part of the administration's response to Soviet-backed terrorism and other clandestine operations.

The directorate was reduced when the CIA was headed by Stansfield Turner in the administration of President Carter. President Reagan replaced Turner with William Casey, who served in the World War II Office of Strategic Services, the predecessor of the CIA.

Mr. Casey was presidential campaign manager for Mr. Reagan.

The source said U.S. intelligence operatives now combine both approaches as in a recent reaction to a terrorist incident in Africa in which hostages taken by terrorists were freed unharmed.

Described as "Star Wars in the bush," the case was satisfactorily handled by teamwork among the local U.S. intelligence station chief, a pair of agents flown out from Wash-

ington, plus information gleaned from sophisticated photography techniques that pinpointed locations of guards.

An analysis of the photographs was done in Washington and flown back to the site, where it was used to extract the hostages without injury.